

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 and 47-53 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-44 and 47-53 were rejected.

Applicant respectfully thanks the examiner for his time in the personal interview of 15 March 2004. In the interview, the Acres reference 6,371,852 was discussed. Applicant argued that that 6,371,852 does not teach the claimed invention because the MCI board provides player tracking processing outside of the central controller. The Examiner agreed that the claims distinguish over Acres (6,371,852) for this reason.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-20, 23-23, 30-35, 38-44 and 47-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Acre's, U.S. patent 6,371,852 B1 (April 16, 2002). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed upon in the personal interview of March 15, 2004, the MCI board in Acres provides player tracking processing outside of the central controller and thus, the claims of the present invention distinguish over Acres. Therefore, Acres can't be said to anticipate the present invention as recited in claims 1-20, 23-28, 30-35, 38-44 and 47-53 and the invention is believed overcome thereby.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

General remarks in regards to why a person in skill of the art would find the present invention non-obvious:

In traditional gaming machines, a separate processor is provided for the player tracking unit to decouple player tracking software from the gaming software that controls the game of chance played on the gaming machine. This decoupling allows the player tracking software to be modified without changing the gaming software. In this configuration, the regulatory requirements for approving the player tracking software are much less than that of the gaming software. As described in the background, there are many different player tracking unit manufacturers with many different requirements that are constantly changing. As is described in the prior art, in an environment where gaming software is executed from read-only PROMs and changes in software require a PROM to be resubmitted for regulatory approval and then manually changed out on the gaming machine, it is desirable to minimize any changes to the gaming software. One of skill in the art would not have found it obvious to implement a gaming

machine in the manner described in the current invention because it would provide an additional source for changes to the gaming software and add additional complexity to the gaming software that could drive up costs related to regulatory approval and the maintenance of gaming software on the gaming machine.

Claims 21, 22, 36 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres (6,371,852) in further view of Acres (5,702,304).

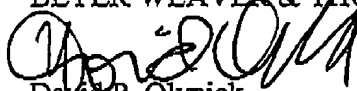
Both Acres references teach implementations of a separate player tracking unit in a gaming machine as manufacturing player tracking units that can be installed in a gaming machine is the basis for Acres business. The additional teaching of Acres ('304) do not overcome the deficiencies described above with respect Acres 6,371,852. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Acres and Acres, alone or in combination, can't be said to render obvious claims 21, 22, 36 and 37 and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

Claims 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres in View Lichtman 5, 819,107.

Examiner relies on Lichtman in regards to software drivers and protocols. The combination of Acres and Lichtman does not correct the deficiencies described with respect to Acres in regards to not teaching all of the limitations of the present invention. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Acres and Lichtman, alone or in combination, can't be said to render obvious claims 29 and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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